



Create, Test, Improve!

Build a House

When you want to make something, you can use a three-step process: **create, test, improve!** This **computational thinking skill** is a creative way of thinking that can help children solve problems in more organized ways. Try the ideas below to practice this skill with your child.

Total time needed: 20–30 minutes



Watch the Story

The Elephant in the Room

Ask your child:

- What happened when the monkeys **tested** their first house for Ellie?
- What did they do to **improve** it?
- Have you ever built a house for your stuffed animals or dolls? How did you make it?



Do the Activity

Build a House

Follow the directions on the next page to create a house. You'll need:

- A large, open space
- Blankets or sheets
- Pillows or cushions
- Large cardboard boxes, tables, chairs, or other furniture
- A favorite toy, doll, or stuffed animal



Watch the Music Video

Create, Test, Improve!

Watch the monkeys sing as they **create** a go-cart, **test** it out, and then **improve** it. That's what you did when you built your house!



Read a Book (Optional)

A House for Birdie

by Stuart J. Murphy

Ask your child:

- What happened when Birdie's friends **tested** the houses?
- How did Birdie find the perfect house?
- Tell me about a time when a friend helped you figure something out.

Do the Activity

Build a House

Build a house that is big enough for you and a stuffed animal, doll, or toy. Make it strong enough so it doesn't fall down. Use these three steps: **create, test, improve!** You can use these steps to make almost anything!



Create!

(see materials on first page)

1. Tell your child:
 - Let's **create** a house for you and your favorite stuffed animal—just like the monkeys made a house for Ellie.
 - It needs to be big enough for both of you and strong enough not to fall down.
2. Help your child think about the house's design by asking:
 - What do you think your house needs? (roof, walls, door)
 - What can we use to **create** the house?
3. **Create it!** Help your child try out his ideas.

TIP: Let your child take the lead

Join in and help, but let your child make most of the decisions and build most of the house. This helps your child practice solving problems.

Test!

1. Tell your child:
 - Let's **test** your house. We need to see if both of you can fit.
 - It needs to be strong enough so it doesn't fall down.
 - How do you think we can **test** your house?
2. Help your child figure out ways to **test** the size and strength of the house.

TIP: Ask good questions

Instead of telling your child what's wrong with the house, ask questions to help him find the problems on his own.

Improve!

1. Depending on the test results, ask:
 - What ideas did **testing** give you to **improve** your house and make it even better?
2. Encourage your child to make **improvements** and **test** them until the house is strong and big enough.
3. When your child is satisfied with the house, remind him of what he did:
 - You used your own ideas to **create** the house. You **tested** it and found things that needed to be **improved**. Then you figured out how to **improve** it and made it even better!

TIP: Make it even better

Challenge your child to make the house big enough for both of you to sit in or for him to sleep in. Can he decorate it to make it cozier? What else can he do to make it better?



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